



The Battle for Srinagar

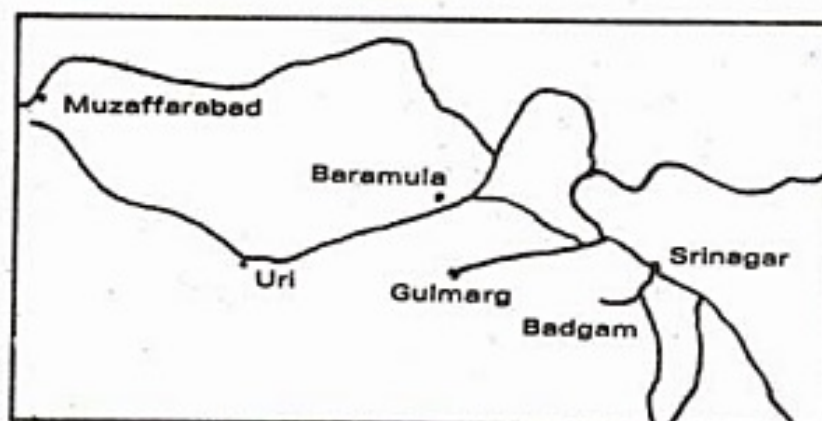
THE HEROIC SAGA OF THE
BATTLE FOUGHT IN 1947

P. G. Srinivasan

The heroic defence of Kashmir against heavy odds in 1947 constitutes a glorious chapter in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces. The country was totally unprepared for such an event. There were shortages of every kind—of men, machines and material. But nothing could deter the indomitable courage and devotion to duty of gallant men like Rajinder Singh, Ranjit Rai, Somnath Sharma and their jawans, whose magnificent actions have been brought to life for the first time in this colourfully illustrated presentation.

For those who read about these undying deeds of valour, there will not only be plenty of thrill and adventure but also a perennial source of inspiration to emulate their example and follow the path of glory.

Map showing the locations of some of the important places that figure in this story



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THE BATTLE FOR SRINAGAR

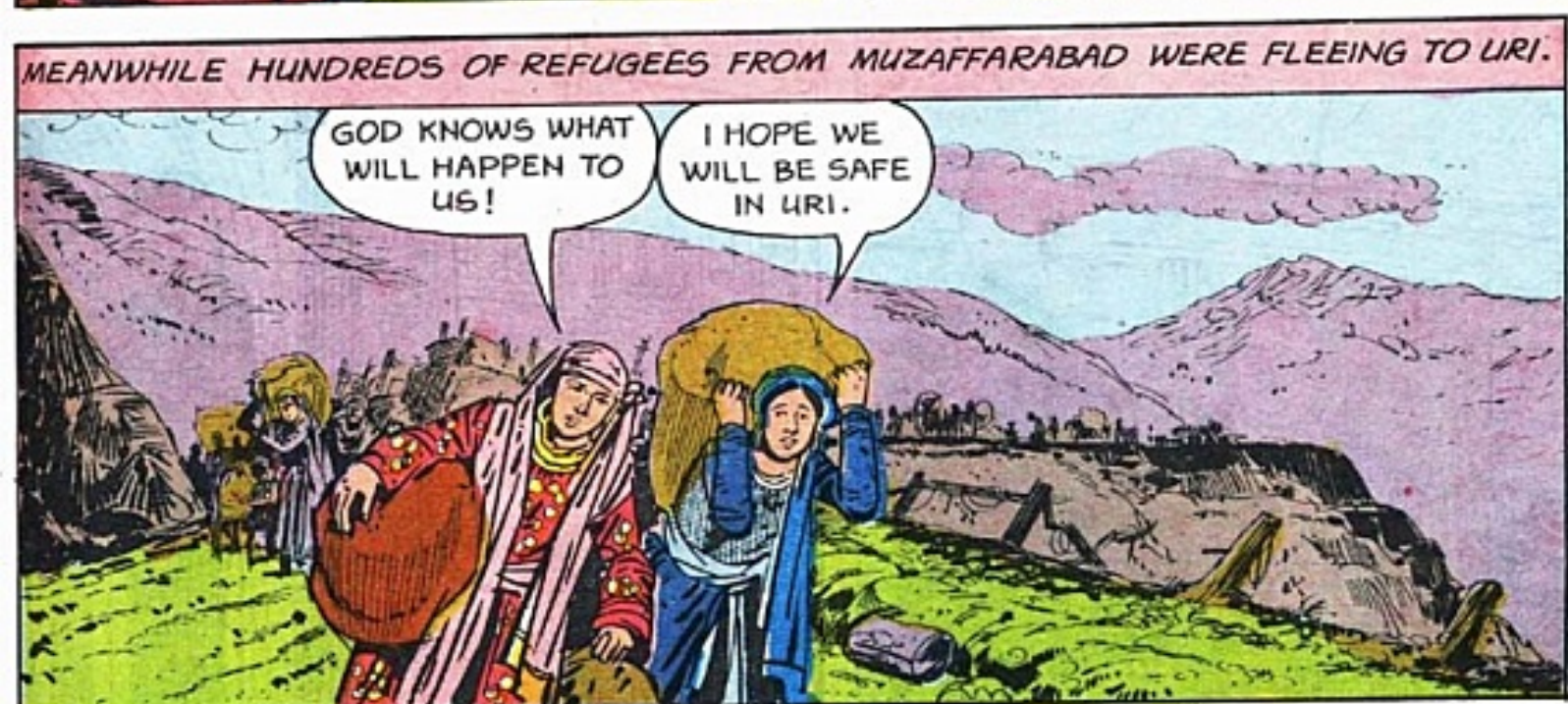
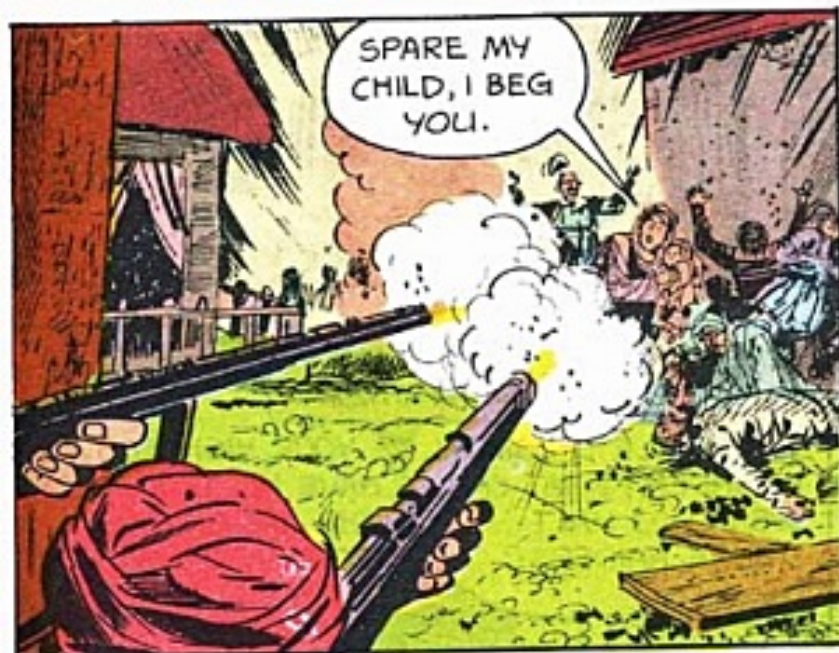
IT WAS OCTOBER 1947. CALM AND QUIET PREVAILED IN SRINAGAR, THE CAPITAL OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR.

BUT MUZAFFARABAD, A BORDER TOWN HARDLY 200 KILOMETRES TO THE WEST, WAS UNDER THE SHADOW OF AN IMPENDING CALAMITY.

I HEAR THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF QABAILIES* ARE CAMPING ACROSS THE BORDER. I WONDER WHY?

I BELIEVE WE ARE GOING TO BE ATTACKED.





WHEN THEY REACHED URI, SOME OF THEM MET THE TEHSILDAR.*

SIR, WE HAD TO LEAVE MUZAFFARABAD TO SAVE OUR LIVES. THE QABAILIES HAVE COME.

THE QABAILIES?

THEY'RE POURING IN FROM ACROSS THE BORDER, SIR. THEY ARE COMING IN TRUCKS!

DON'T WORRY. I'LL INFORM SRINAGAR. THE STATE TROOPS WILL BE HERE VERY SOON.

WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THE MAHARAJA IN SRINAGAR —

A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION INDEED! WE MUST STOP THE RAIDERS AT ONCE.

YOUR HIGHNESS, ONLY THE ARMY CAN DO THAT NOW!

BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH, CHIEF OF STAFF, WAS SUMMONED.

A TERRIBLE CALAMITY, RAJINDER! WHAT CAN WE DO TO HALT THESE RAIDERS?

YOUR HIGHNESS, WE HAVE NO TROOPS ON THE URI-SRINAGAR ROAD BUT I WILL TRY TO MUSTER SOME.



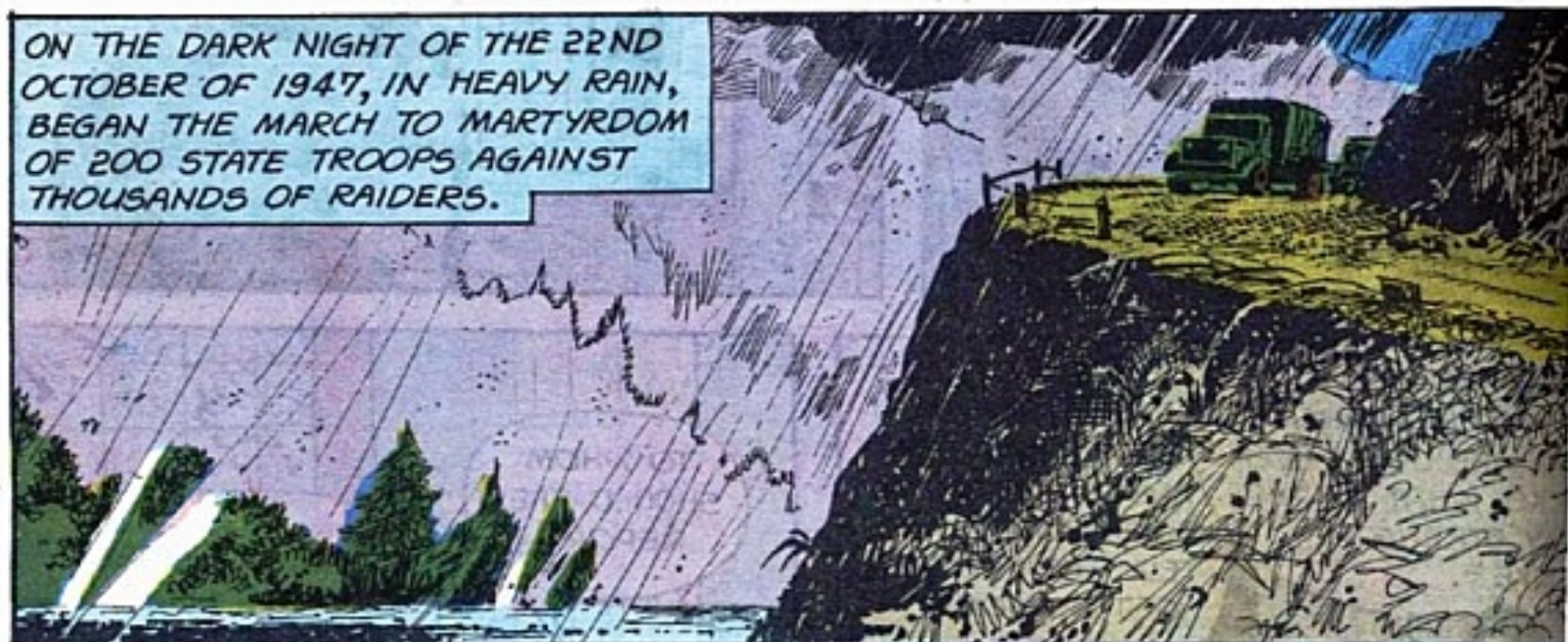
BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH LEFT THE PALACE AND WENT TO HIS HEADQUARTERS TO PLAN THE MARCH TO URI.



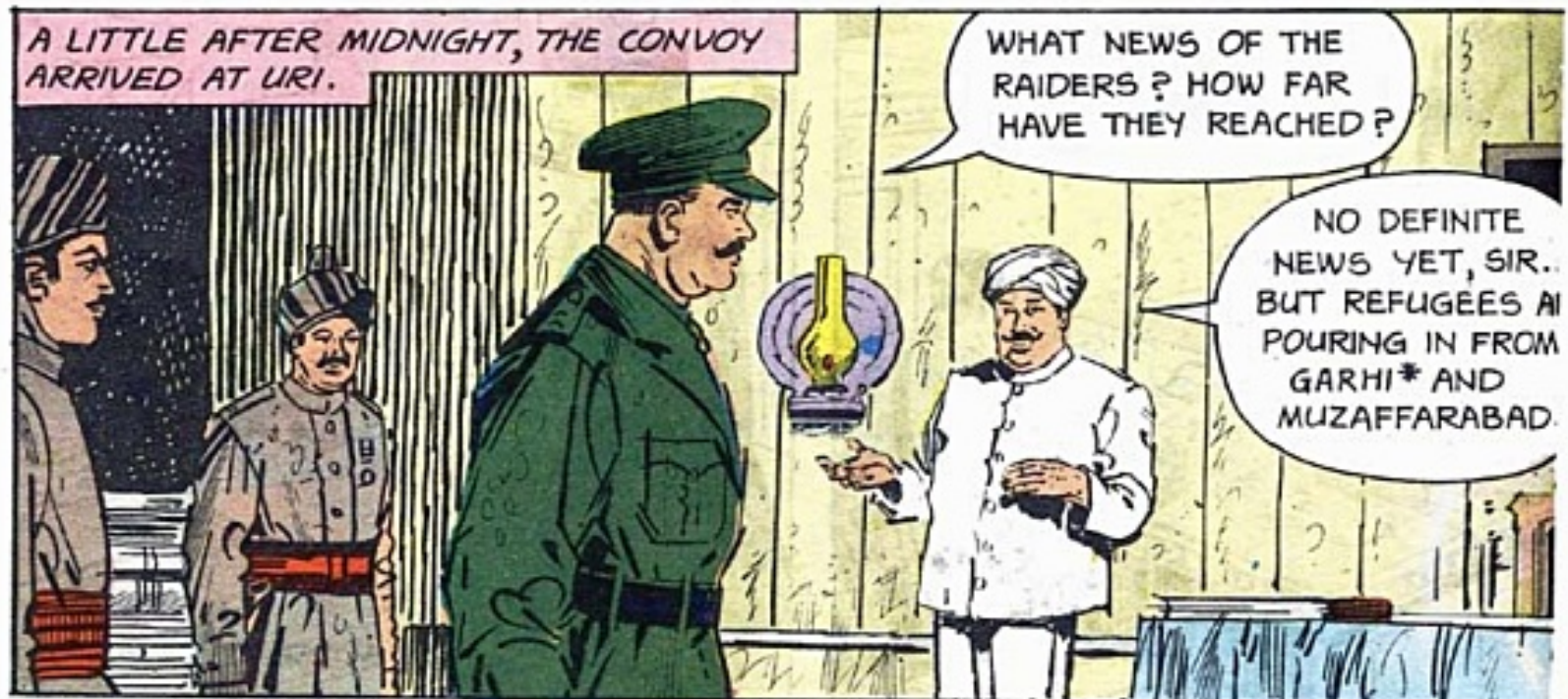


TELL THE DRIVERS
TO BE VERY CAREFUL.
I CAN'T AFFORD TO
LOSE A SINGLE
VEHICLE DOWN
THE JHELM.

ON THE DARK NIGHT OF THE 22ND
OCTOBER OF 1947, IN HEAVY RAIN,
BEGAN THE MARCH TO MARTYRDOM
OF 200 STATE TROOPS AGAINST
THOUSANDS OF RAIDERS.



A LITTLE AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE CONVOY
ARRIVED AT URI.



WHAT NEWS OF THE
RAIDERS? HOW FAR
HAVE THEY REACHED?

NO DEFINITE
NEWS YET, SIR.
BUT REFUGEES ARE
POURING IN FROM
GARHI* AND
MUZAFFARABAD.

* ABOUT 150 KMS. WEST OF SRINAGAR

EARLY NEXT MORNING, THE CONVOY LEFT FOR GARHI.

SLOW DOWN. THOSE MUST BE THE REFUGEES. SWITCH ON THE HEAD LIGHTS.



ARE YOU COMING FROM GARHI? WHERE ARE THE QABAILIES?

WE LEFT GARHI AT NIGHT. THE RAIDERS WERE EXPECTED THERE AT ANY MOMENT.



AS THE CONVOY PICKED UP SPEED —

THEY ARE COMING IN THOUSANDS, SIR. TAKE CARE.

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL THROW THEM OUT.



THE CONVOY APPROACHED GARHI AND —

ENEMY! HALT THE VEHICLES. TAKE COVER AND FIRE.



THE RAIDERS WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS.



OH, THESE MUST BE THE STATE TROOPS! FINISH THEM OFF.

A DEADLY ENCOUNTER BEGAN.



AN OFFICER DIVED UNDER COVER AS A BULLET WHIZZED PAST HIM.



THE ENEMY STRENGTH IS VERY GREAT, SIR. WE HAVE ALREADY LOST FORTY MEN.

I DON'T THINK WE CAN STOP THEM HERE! WE WILL HAVE TO FALL BACK.

RAJINDER SINGH AND HIS MEN WITHDREW TO URI.



A WIRELESS MESSAGE HAS JUST COME IN, SIR. TWO MORTARS AND TWO MMG'S* ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE FROM SRINAGAR.

VERY GOOD! NOW I CAN GIVE THE RAIDERS A HOT RECEPTION WHEN THEY COME.

RAJINDER SINGH MADE HIS PLANS TO MEET THE RAIDERS.



TELL THE DEMOLITION PARTY TO PREPARE TO BLOW UP THE BRIDGE.

THE DEMOLITION SQUAD SET
TO WORK.



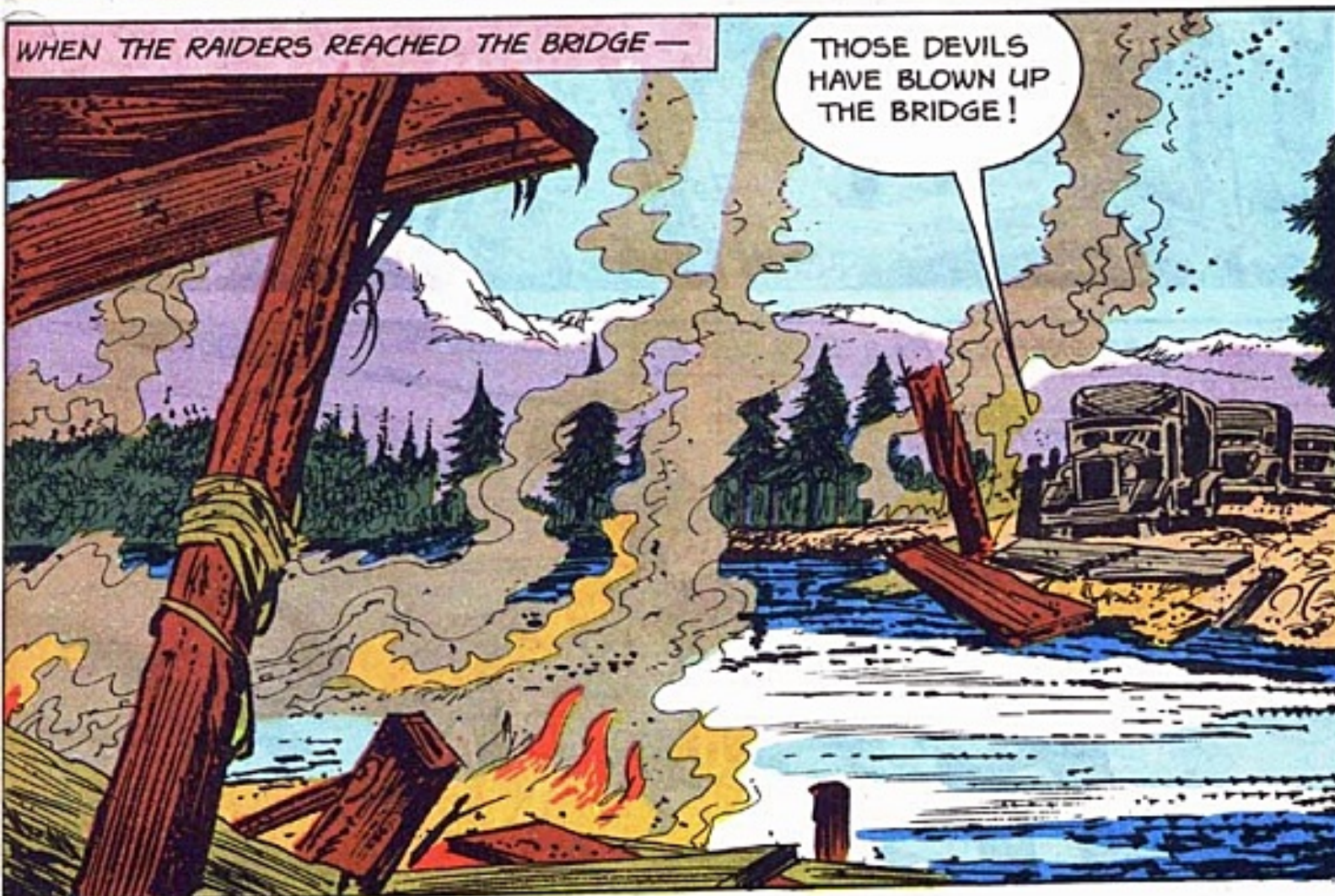
MEANWHILE, THE RAIDERS
WERE FAST ADVANCING
ON URI.

ONCE WE
CROSS THE URI
NULLAH * SRI-
NAGAR WILL
BE OURS.



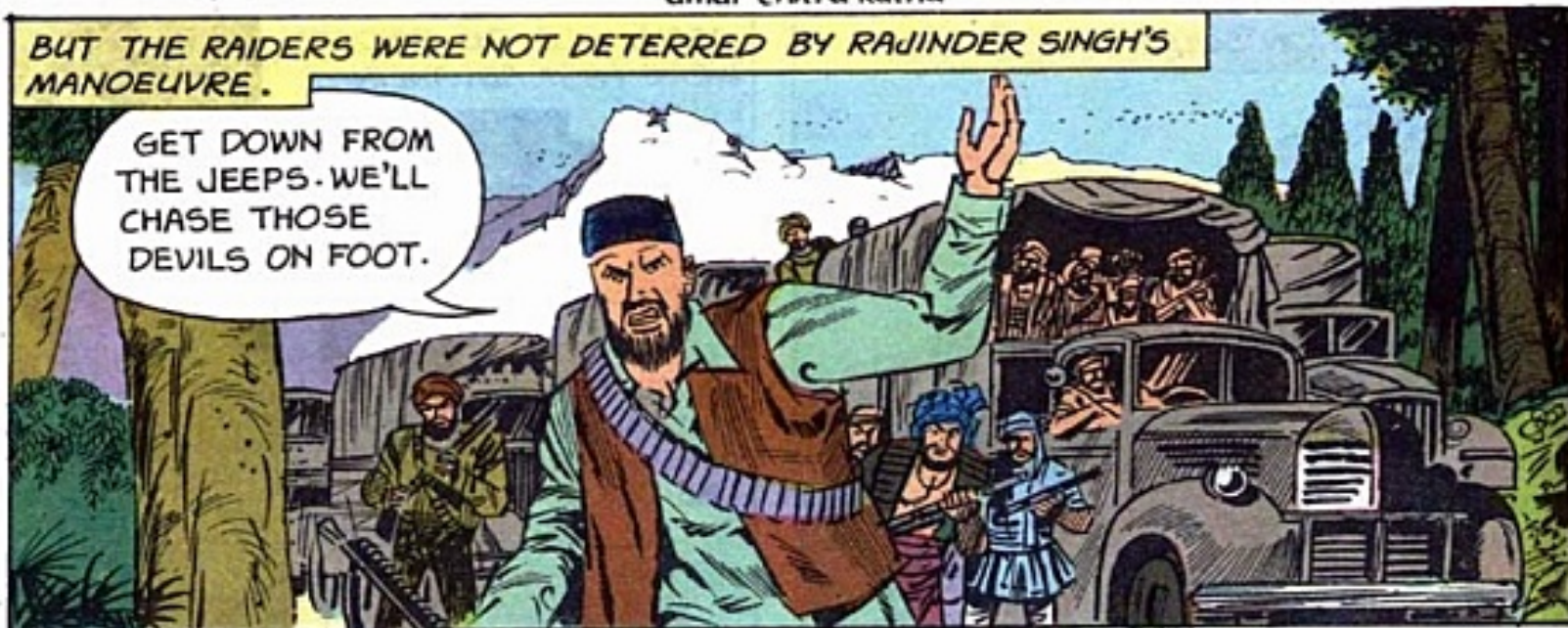
WHEN THE RAIDERS REACHED THE BRIDGE —

THOSE DEVILS
HAVE BLOWN UP
THE BRIDGE!



BUT THE RAIDERS WERE NOT DETERRED BY RAJINDER SINGH'S MANOEUVRE.

GET DOWN FROM THE JEEPS. WE'LL CHASE THOSE DEVILS ON FOOT.



THE RAIDERS SPREAD OUT ALL ALONG THE NULLAH AND CROSSED IT AT VARIOUS POINTS...



... ONLY TO BE GREETED BY A SHOWER OF BULLETS.



DESPITE THEIR SMALL NUMBERS, THE DETERMINED KASHMIR TROOPS TOOK A HEAVY TOLL OF THE RAIDERS.



AFTER BITTER FIGHTING THROUGH-OUT THE DAY —



SIXTY MORE MEN— SOME KILLED, SOME WOUNDED—ARE OUT OF COMBAT, SIR.

WELL, PASS A MESSAGE ROUND THAT WE WILL WITHDRAW TO BUNIYAR DURING THE NIGHT.

ON REACHING BUNIYAR, DEFENCES WERE ORGANISED FROM LATE NIGHT TO EARLY MORNING.



OUR MACHINE GUNS AND MORTARS MUST INFLICT THE MAXIMUM DAMAGE.

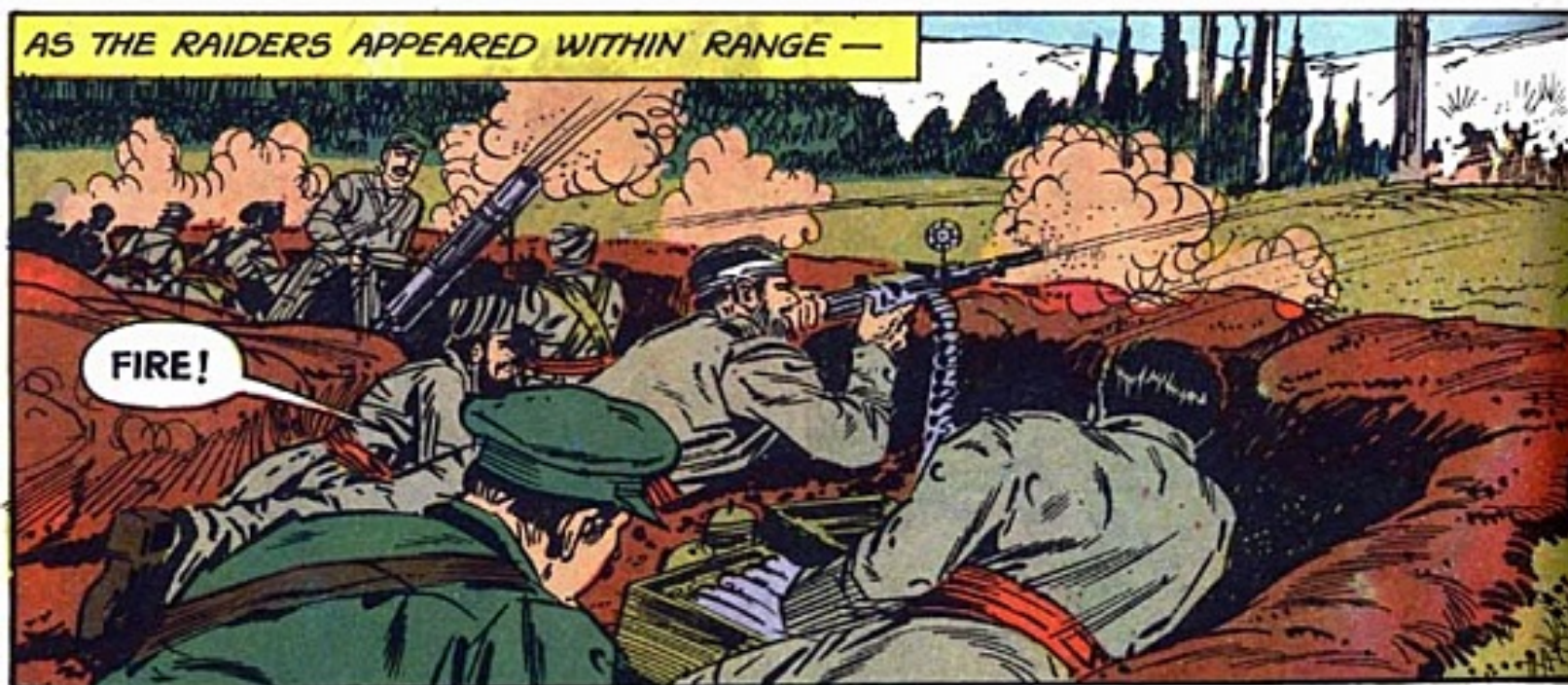
TRENCHES WERE DUG AND MACHINE GUNS WERE MOUNTED.



MAKE NO MOVEMENT AND DO NOT OPEN FIRE TILL THEY COME WITHIN RANGE.



SINCE THE BRIDGE HAD BEEN BLOWN UP, THE RAIDERS COULD NOT USE THEIR VEHICLES AND WERE SLOW TO ARRIVE.





IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO ADVANCE! THE
MORTAR AND
MACHINE GUN FIRE
IS HOLDING US
UP.

WHAT HAPPENED
TO OUR MORTARS?
WHERE ARE THEY?

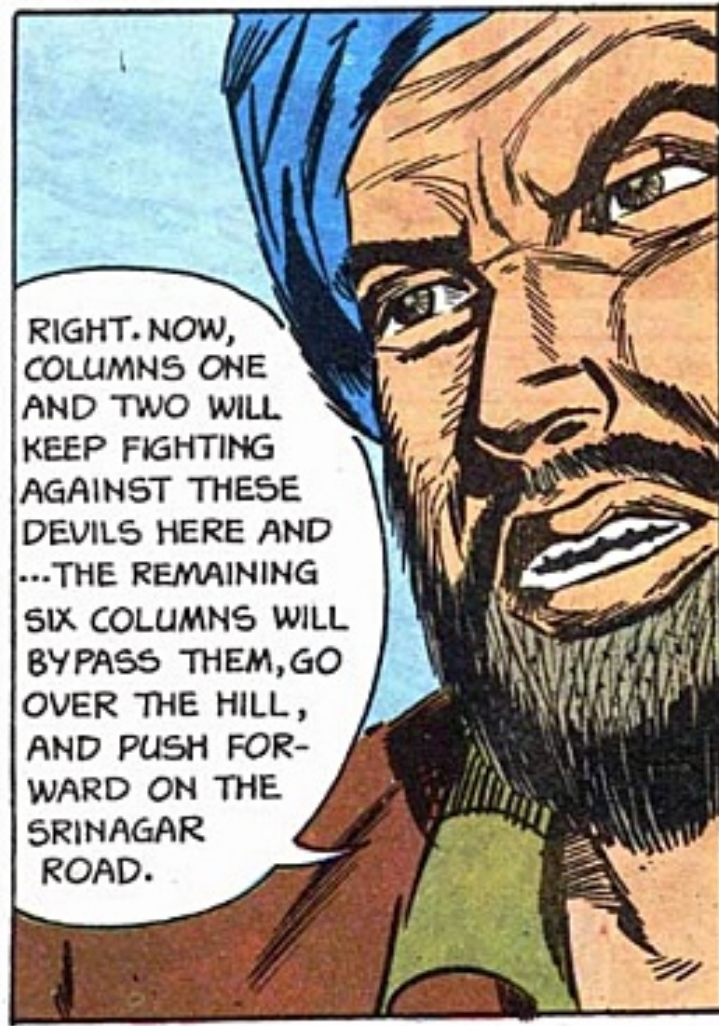


THEY ARE IN THE
TRUCKS! TILL
THE BRIDGE IS
REPAIRED, THE
TRUCKS CAN'T
MOVE.

WELL, SOMETHING
MUST BE DONE.
WE CAN'T JUST
HANG ABOUT
LIKE THIS!



RIGHT. NOW,
COLUMNS ONE
AND TWO WILL
KEEP FIGHTING
AGAINST THESE
DEVILS HERE AND
...THE REMAINING
SIX COLUMNS WILL
BYPASS THEM, GO
OVER THE HILL,
AND PUSH FOR-
WARD ON THE
SRINAGAR
ROAD.

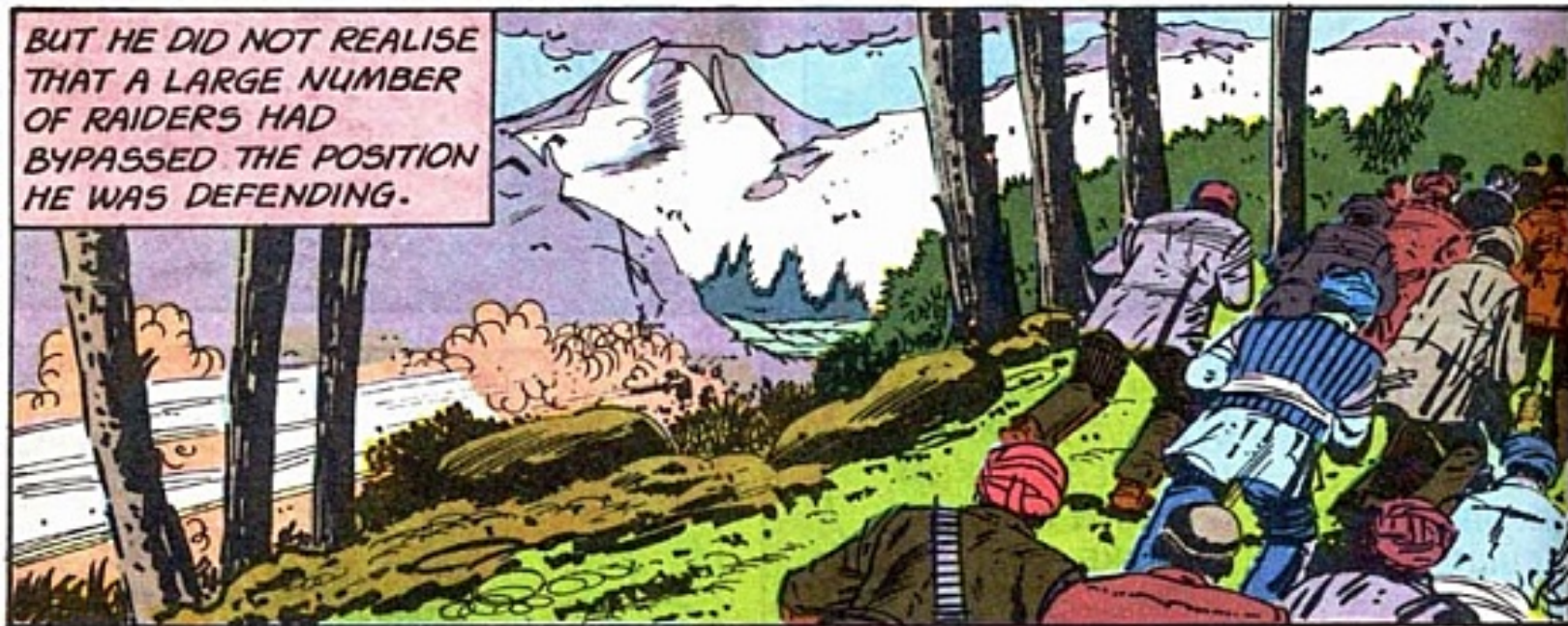


RAJINDER SINGH FOUGHT VALIANTLY TO HOLD ON TO HIS POSITION.

KEEP IT UP, BOYS!
DON'T LET THEM
ADVANCE AN
INCH!



BUT HE DID NOT REALISE
THAT A LARGE NUMBER
OF RAIDERS HAD
BYPASSED THE POSITION
HE WAS DEFENDING.



MEANWHILE THE RAIDERS HAD RECEIVED REINFORCEMENT.

GOOD NEWS!
THE BRIDGE
IS REPAIRED.
THE TRUCKS
CAN NOW
COME
THROUGH.

NOW WE MUST SMASH
THESE DEVILS AND REACH
SRINAGAR QUICKLY. WE
HAVE ALREADY LOST
THREE DAYS.



THE SITUATION WAS NOT ROSY FOR RAJINDER SINGH.

WE ARE RUNNING SHORT OF FOOD AND AMMUNITION, SIR.

AND TWENTY MORE MEN HAVE BEEN WOUNDED.



AFTER FIVE DAYS OF NON-STOP MOVES, COUNTER MOVES AND DEADLY FIGHTING, BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH WAS AGAIN FORCED TO WITHDRAW WITH HIS REMAINING TROOPS.

WHAT TIME SHALL WE START MOVING OUT?

SOON AFTER 1-00 A.M. AND THEN WE GO BACK, STRAIGHT TO BARAMULA*.

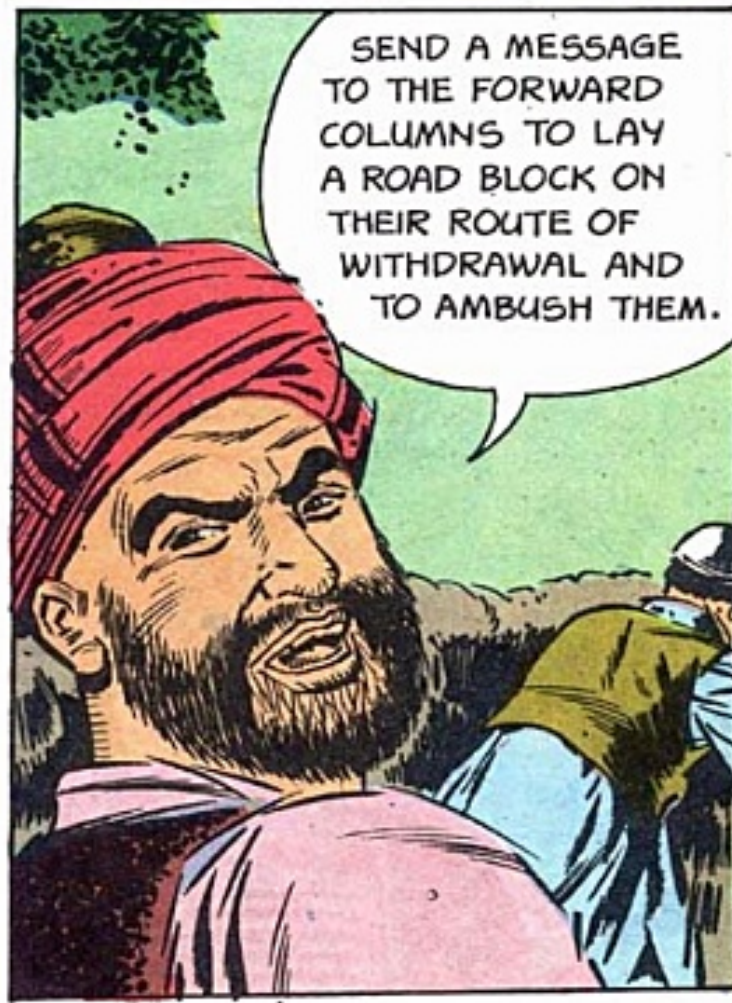


BUT THE RAIDERS HAD FORESEEN RAJINDER SINGH'S NEXT MOVE.

IF WE ARE NOT QUICK, THESE WILY FELLOWS WILL SLIP AWAY.



SEND A MESSAGE TO THE FORWARD COLUMNS TO LAY A ROAD BLOCK ON THEIR ROUTE OF WITHDRAWAL AND TO AMBUSH THEM.



AT 2-00 A.M., RAJINDER
AND HIS MEN GOT INTO
THE TRUCKS AND
STARTED THEIR
FATEFUL WITHDRAWAL.



BUT AS THEY JUMPED DOWN FROM THE TRUCKS THEY WERE GREETED BY A VOLLEY OF BULLETS AND SHELLS.



BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH WAS HIT IN THE CHEST AND BOTH HIS LEGS WERE FRACTURED, YET HE SCRAMBLED INTO THE TRUCK.

MOST OF THE DRIVERS ARE KILLED. SHALL WE DIG UP POSITIONS HERE?

NO! NOW IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL! WE MUST LEAVE. I WILL DRIVE THIS TRUCK.



OH, HE IS COLLAPSING! LET US TAKE HIM AWAY TO A SAFE PLACE.



THE RAIDERS WERE NOW JUBILANT.

I THINK WE
HAVE WOUNDED
THEIR COMMANDER.
GOOD SHOW!

NOW, CHARGE
LIKE FURY!
LET US FINISH
THEM OFF.



MEANWHILE RAJINDER WAS TAKEN
TO DIWAN MANDIR.

WE SHALL HOLD OFF
THE ENEMY. YOU MUST
GO BACK TO BARA-
MULA HOSPITAL.

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME. GO
OUT AND DESTROY
THE ENEMY. KASHMIR
MUST BE SAVED.
I HAVE DONE MY
DUTY.



SOON HE BREATHED HIS LAST.

HIS SACRIFICE
WILL NOT BE IN
VAIN!



THERE WAS NO TIME EVEN TO SHED TEARS
FOR THE VALIANT LEADER. THE RAIDERS
HAD TO BE CONTAINED. RAJINDER'S MEN
FOUGHT FIERCELY AND MANY OF THEM
WERE KILLED.

ON TO SRINAGAR!
NO MORE OBSTRUC-
TIONS ON THE WAY
NOW!



AT MAHURA ON THEIR ROUTE, THE RAIDERS SET THE POWER STATION ON FIRE.



SRINAGAR WILL BE IN DARKNESS WHEN WE GET THERE — AND THAT WILL SUIT US!

WHEN THEY REACHED BARAMULA —



THIS IS PARADISE! PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR LOOT AND PLUNDER! GO ALL OUT!

THEY DID NOT SPARE EVEN THE NUNS LIVING PEACEFULLY IN A CONVENT NEAR BY.

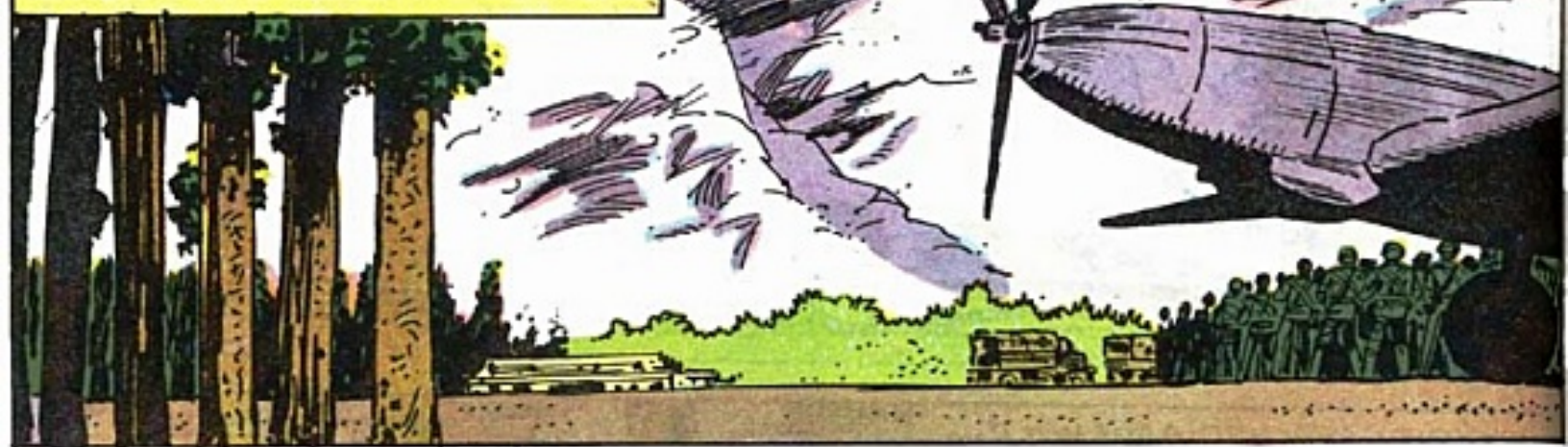


WHILE THE LOOTING WAS ON —

GET THE MACHINE GUNS UP THAT HILL AND COVER THE SRINAGAR ROAD IN CASE...

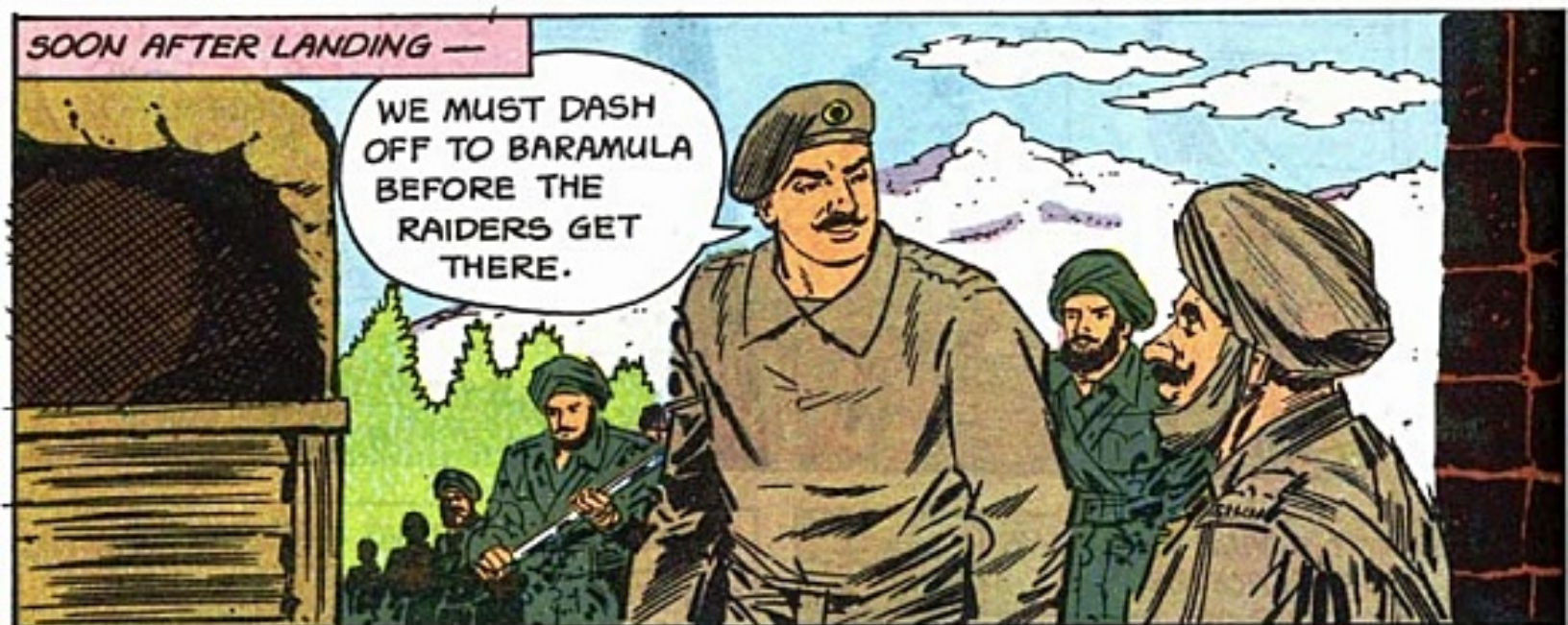


MEANWHILE KASHMIR HAD JOINED THE INDIAN UNION. THE FIRST SIKH BATTALION UNDER LT. COL. RANJIT RAI LANDED AT SRINAGAR.

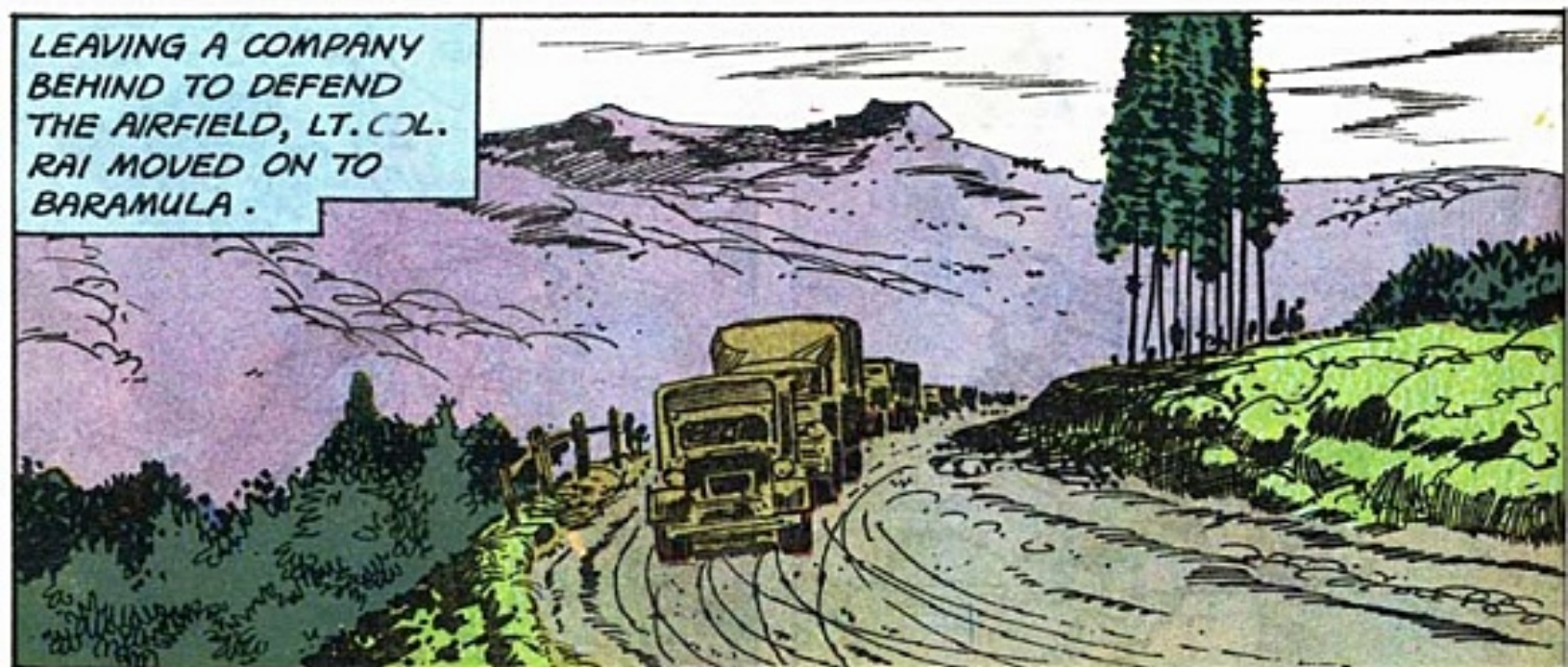


SOON AFTER LANDING —

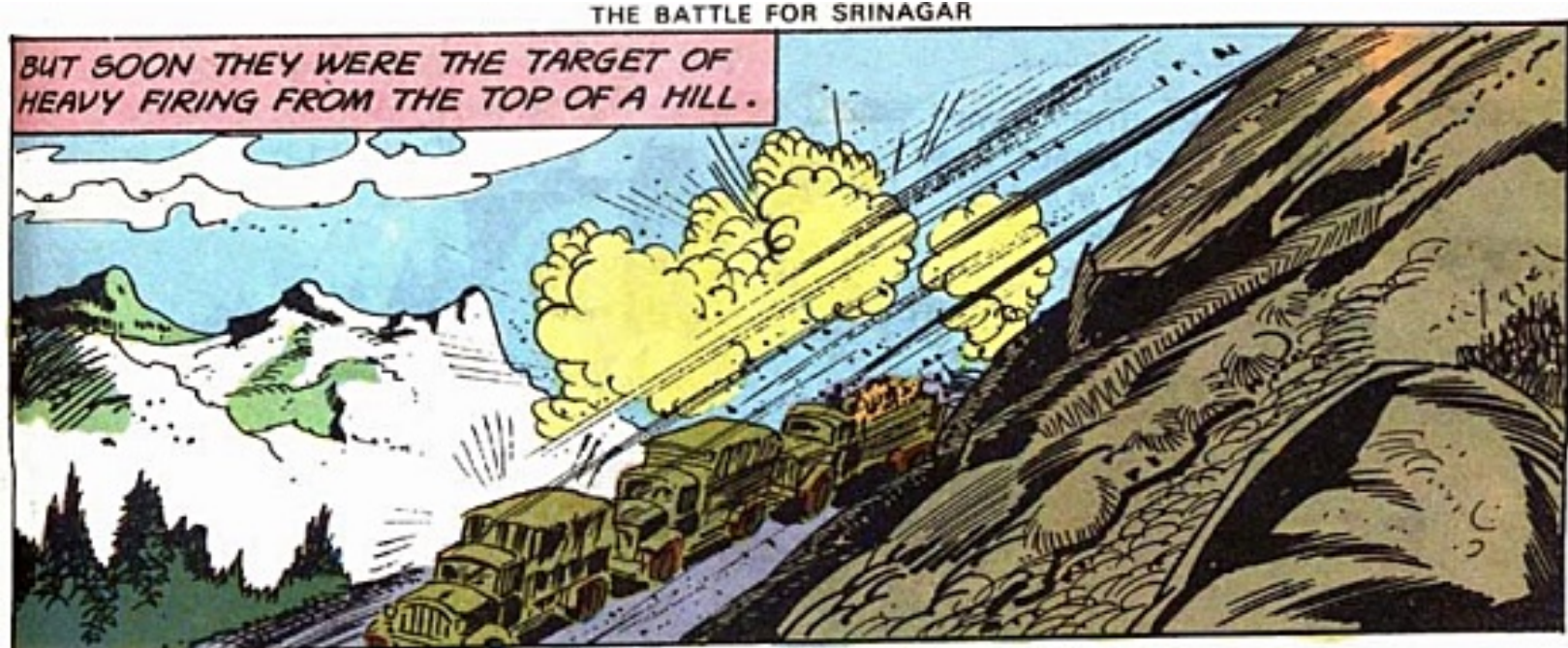
WE MUST DASH OFF TO BARAMULA BEFORE THE RAIDERS GET THERE.



LEAVING A COMPANY BEHIND TO DEFEND THE AIRFIELD, LT. COL. RAI MOVED ON TO BARAMULA.



BUT SOON THEY WERE THE TARGET OF HEAVY FIRING FROM THE TOP OF A HILL.



RAI WAS HIT BY A BULLET AND FELL.



MAJOR BACHAN SINGH TOOK OVER COMMAND AND LED HIS COMPANIES SAFELY TO PATTAN.*



THE RAIDERS WILL BE HERE SOON. USE EVERY MAN ON THE DEFENCES. AND ASK THE COMPANY DETAILED AT THE AIRFIELD TO JOIN US HERE.

AFTER SOME TIME —

HERE THEY COME!
SAT SRI AKAL!* NOW
LET OUR MMG'S
AND MORTARS
SPIT FIRE.



THE GUNS AND
MORTARS TOOK A
HEAVY TOLL OF
THE RAIDERS...



... WHO WITHDREW AND HELD HURRIED
CONSULTATIONS.

THE INDIAN TROOPS
SEEM TO BE HERE IN FULL
STRENGTH. WE CAN'T GO
PAST THEM TO SRI-
NAGAR.



CAN'T WE PASS
THEM DISGUISED
AS REFUGEES?





FROM MUZAFFARABAD.
WE WERE DRIVEN OUT
OF OUR HOMES.

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL
THROW OUT THE RAIDERS
AND SOON YOU'LL BE
ABLE TO RETURN HOME.



MEANWHILE AT
4 KUMAON
HEADQUARTERS
IN DELHI —

ORDERS HAVE
COME IN FOR THE
UNIT TO MOVE TO
SRINAGAR. LET
MAJOR SHARMA'S
COMPANY GO
TODAY.



AT THE TIME, MAJOR SOMNATH SHARMA
WAS IN HOSPITAL WITH A FRACTURED
ARM.

WHAT! MY COMPANY
TO MOVE TO SRINAGAR?
WONDERFUL! I WILL
ASK THE DOCTOR TO
DISCHARGE ME AT
ONCE.



BUT THE DOCTOR DID NOT SHARE
SHARMA'S ENTHUSIASM.

YOU ARE IN
NO CONDITION
TO FIGHT,
SHARMA.

BUT I MUST
GO WITH MY
COMPANY.



MAJOR SHARMA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BOARD THE PLANE ...



...FOR SRINAGAR.



LATER WHEN HE REPORTED TO BRIG. L.P. SEN, THE OFFICER IN COMMAND OF THE OPERATIONS—



I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE SECURITY OF BADGAM AIRFIELD, MAJ. SHARMA.

I WANT YOU AND RONNIE WOOD* TO MOVE WITH YOUR MEN FROM OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS, AND MAKE A THOROUGH COMB-OUT OF BADGAM. IF YOU SEE ANY SIGN OF RAIDERS, REPORT AT ONCE.



* OFFICER IN CHARGE OF ANOTHER COMPANY

SHARMA AND HIS MEN APPROACHED BADGAM FROM THE SOUTH, SEARCHING FOR RAIDERS.



LATER THEY WERE MET BY RONNIE WOOD'S GROUP WHICH HAD SEARCHED THROUGH BADGAM FROM THE NORTH.

SEEN ANY RAIDERS YET, RONNIE?

NO SIGN OF THE BLIGHTERS. THE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH REFUGEES. I SAW SOME OF THEM MAKING TEA NEAR THE NULLAH DOWN THERE.



WHEN SHARMA REPORTED TO HEADQUARTERS —

ASK RONNIE TO RETURN TO BASE. SEND BACK YOUR 'A' COMPANY BUT STAY THERE WITH THE 'D' COMPANY FOR SOME TIME, IN CASE ...



JUST THEN A SHEPHERD CAME RUNNING TO THE HEADQUARTERS.

QABAILIES!
HUNDREDS
OF THEM!

WHERE DID YOU
SEE THEM?



THEY WERE PASSING
THROUGH GULMARG
LAST NIGHT AND ARE
MOVING FAST
TOWARDS BADGAM.

BADGAM!
GOOD
HEAVENS!



BRIG. SEN WAS INFORMED AND
HE TOOK IMMEDIATE ACTION.

THE AIR FORCE WILL
CARRY OUT STRAFING.
MEANWHILE, GET
SHARMA TO PUT UP
A STRONG DEFENCE.



AT BADGAM —

SIR, THOSE
REFUGEES NEAR
THE NULLAH ARE
CLIMBING TOWARDS
US.

PERHAPS THEY
ARE GOING TO
SRINAGAR.





THE RAIDERS FIRED RELENTLESSLY.

DON'T SPARE A SINGLE LIFE. NO INDIAN JAWAN SHOULD ESCAPE ALIVE!

SHARMA'S POSITION BECAME DESPERATE. HE CALLED HEADQUARTERS.

THERE ARE ALMOST SEVEN HUNDRED RAIDERS AGAINST US. I NEED REINFORCEMENTS URGENTLY.

HOLD ON, SON. THE KITES WILL BE SOON UP ON A STRAFING MISSION.

A FEW MINUTES LATER —

THE INDIAN AIR FORCE!



MAJOR SHARMA STARTED FILLING THE MAGAZINES FOR HIS GUNNERS.



SUDDENLY —

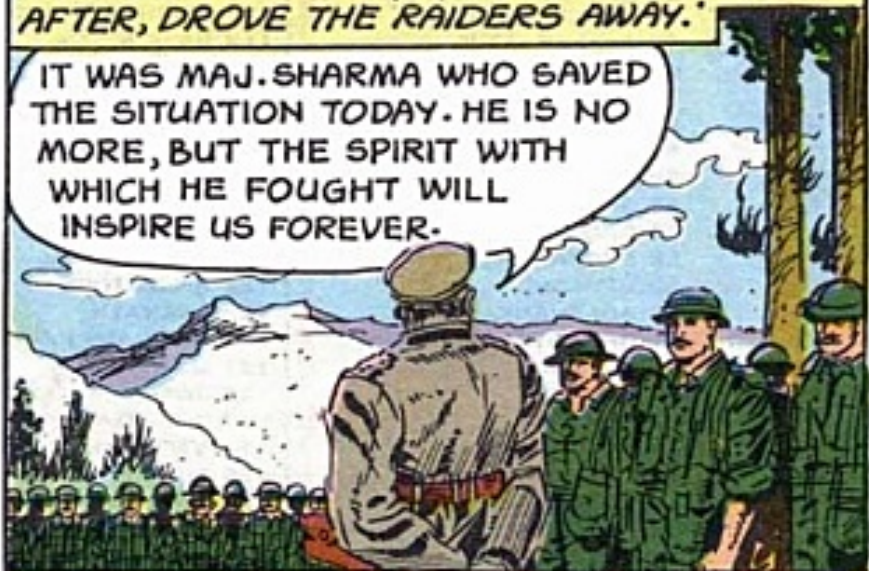


CARRY ON, BOYS!
YIELD NOT AN INCH
TO THE INVADERS!



MAJOR SHARMA'S STRUGGLE WAS NOT IN VAIN. THE TWO OTHER COMPANIES OF THE KUMAON REGIMENT, WHICH ARRIVED SOON AFTER, DROVE THE RAIDERS AWAY.

IT WAS MAJ. SHARMA WHO SAVED THE SITUATION TODAY. HE IS NO MORE, BUT THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH HE FOUGHT WILL INSPIRE US FOREVER.



BRIGADIER RAJINDER SINGH AND MAJOR SOMNATH SHARMA STOOD FIRM LIKE ROCKS AGAINST THE FURIOUS ONSLAUGHTS OF THE RAIDERS. THEY DIED AT THEIR POSTS IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY. THE GRATEFUL NATION AWARDED HER GALLANT SONS THE MAHAVIR CHAKRA (POSTHUMOUS) AND PARAMAVIR CHAKRA (POSTHUMOUS), RESPECTIVELY.



AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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Acquaint your
children with their
cultural heritage

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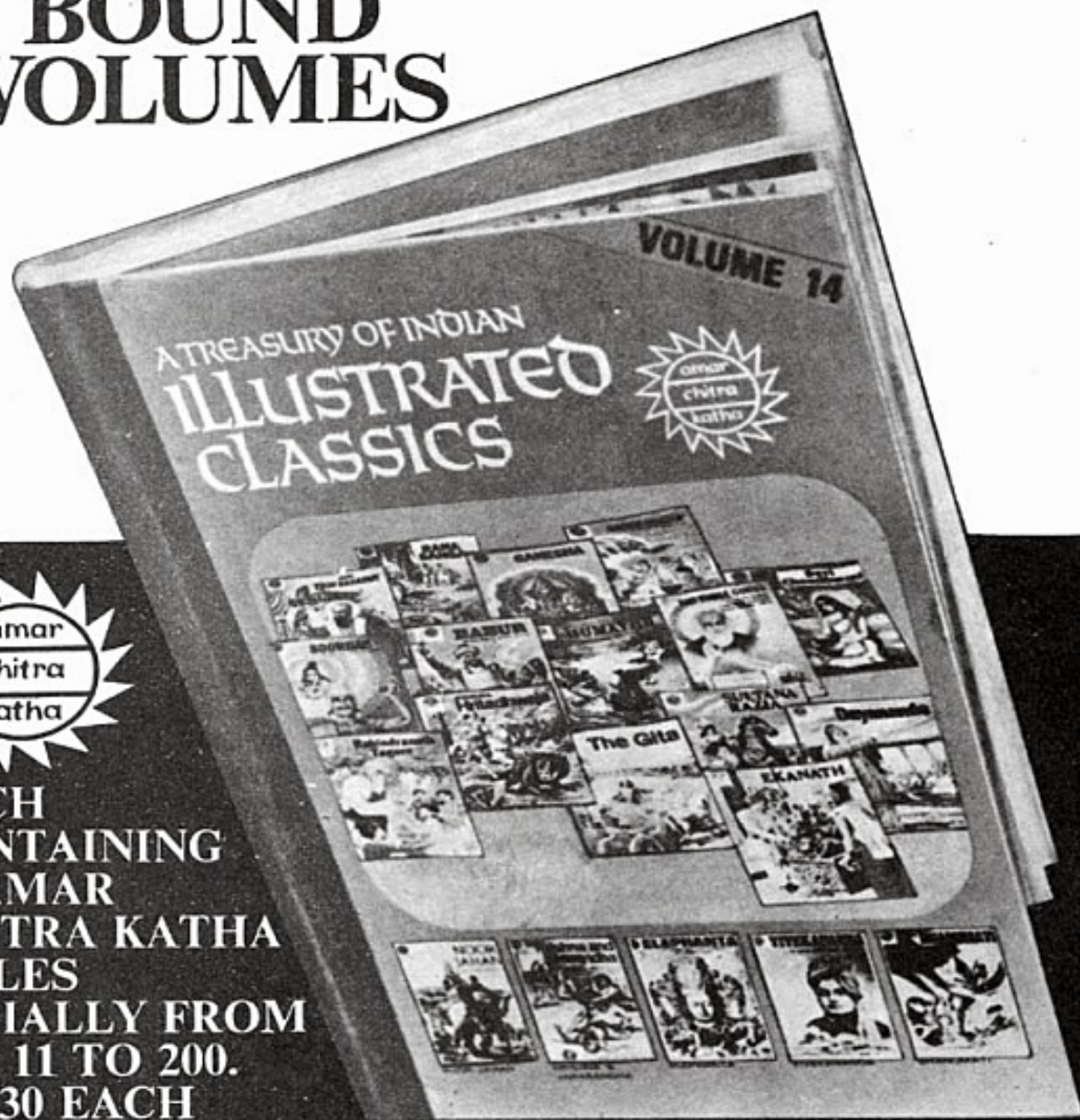
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